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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 7523

BILL NUMBER: SB 531

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 14, 2009

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Tuition Reduction for Volunteer Firefighters.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Stutzman

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FIRST SPONSOR:

FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State

Summary of Legislation: This bill provides for a 50% reduction in tuition and fees at state educational institutions for certain volunteer firefighters.

Effective Date: July 1, 2009.

Explanation of State Expenditures: The bill would provide a 50% tuition support exemption for volunteer firefighters who:

1. Joins a fire department as a volunteer.
2. Completes all necessary training and obtains required certifications.
3. Agrees in writing to remain active with the department for at least 5 years.
4. Attends at least 30% of the fire departments's emergency incidents, drills, and meetings each year.

The bill limits the number of volunteer firefighters the fire chief can certify to 5 the first year and an additional 5 each subsequent academic years. There are about 837 volunteer fire departments in Indiana.

For FY 2007-08 the average tuition and fee exemption from the Student Assistance Commission was \$3,503.

The impact would depend on the number of volunteer firefighters that might apply for the exemption. The maximum impact would be about \$15.4 M (837 departments * maximum of 5 firefighters * \$3,503 average exemption * 1.05 for tuition growth). The impact for every 1,000 volunteer firefighters provided the exemption would be about \$3.7 M.

Explanation of State Revenues: The bill provides that if a person submits false or misleading information

on the application for this exemption, they would be subject to a Class A misdemeanor.

Explanation of Local Expenditures: A Class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to one year in jail. The average daily cost to incarcerate a prisoner in a county jail is approximately \$44.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: State Student Assistance Commission; State Institutions of Higher Education.

Local Agencies Affected: Trial courts, local law enforcement agencies.

Information Sources: Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association, State Student Assistance Commission Annual Report.

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